

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS	87
ment is three feet or less in length, and five or six inches in diameter at the head, narrowing toward the base (pl. xxvi), being constricted about six or seven inches from the bottom, then flaring slightly. Drums are hewn from a solid piece of wood, and fitted with a tight head of iguana-skin, which is shrunk over the large end and held in place with fiber cord glued on with dried blood. The drums are also furnished with a fiber rope for suspension. At a <i>Chichara</i> festival one Indian was seen standing with a drum under his left arm and its carrying strap over his left shoulder, slapping the head of the drum with the open right palm. Beside him stood another Indian with his right arm about the drummer's shoulders. They danced with a skipping sidewise step, the drummer beating his instrument while the other thumped his chest in unison with the left hand. This goblet-like form of drum is antique, as there is a specimen made of pottery, from an ancient grave, in the National Museum at San José. Unfinished drums of a shorter, double-headed, barrel-shaped vari-	534 [482] [535] [172]●
AND MONOGRAPHS	3

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Bribri

Cabezar

482 (fig. 9, d). *Havos* fastened to the tumpline are also used by both sexes to carry cargo.

487 Roads. The forest of southern Costa Rica is among the densest in the world. Trails, however, have been kept open since pre-Columbian times when trade was common between the Pacific and Caribbean sides (see Trade). Even today, one passes through cleared tunnels under the matted roots of trees and shrubs which, according to tradition, are the same passages "used by all our grandfathers." Of the three trails which cross the range (see Geography), that connecting the Lari region with Cabagra is famous for its hammock bridges made of vines which span chasms and swift-flowing, boulder-ridden rivers. These bridges are also known in upper Chirripó. They are called in Bribri *ísa* which is the same word used for hammock, vine, bridge, and string.

491 The vines are woven netlike to form one or two sides. The first type can be either a single net, the person crossing sideways as a crab, or it is placed as a railing along a log. To make the second style, two stout vines are swung across the space to be bridged and fastened securely on both sides. A narrow foot path of braided vines is tied to these so as to form a V, and the sides are laced in a large V-shape, or netlike, to the braided portion (fig. 11, a). These hammock bridges are remade every six months by the men from the nearest houses.

MANUFACTURES

283 One of the most important fibers comes from *pita* (*Agave* sp.). The presence of this plant in the forest is a sign, like the *pejibayes*, of a former habitation site. *Pita* is made into thread to tie arrows, carrying nets, etc. Both men and women prepare this fiber, although it is generally the women's task. The leaf is cut, peeled, and both ends chopped off to even the length. Every five inches the leaf is folded to soften it, and then it is put on a log and scraped with the blunt edge of a machete from the top to the bottom. At the bottom end, the woman pulls the remaining outer fibers off and ties the two ends of the leaf

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Cabécar

756 Cabécar, its origin dates from before the birth of the world. At that time, *sibu* owned

778 a staff which in a certain sense was his monitor.

[770] It is interesting to note that wooden staffs which are obviously ceremonial have been

• [172] found in caches associated with the Highland archaeology on the slopes of Irazú volcano

(fig. 12, a).¹⁴⁴ They are a South American trait and are still used by medicine men among

[171] the Chocó of Colombia and by tribes in the Amazon basin. In Talamancas itself, chief and medicine man staffs were carved as late as

the 19th century (fig. 12, b).¹⁴⁵ In Spanish, the medicine man's staff used today (fig. 11, c) is known as the *palo de cacique*, its red wood popularly believed to be *cacique* wood.

There is a mystical connection between the medicine man and his staff which is supposed

[787] to carry his curing power as well as contact benevolent spirits who help him cure. In

Bribri it is called *bižabləkərkeLi*. This literally translated means: *bižablə*, a term applied to the songs of the medicine man in the night; *kər* = for; *keLi* = staff. Only the medicine men know where to find this firm wood.¹⁴⁶

756 There is still another wooden object used for curing when the patient is in the last stages

755 of an illness and nothing else will work. This

[778] is a balsa log on which the medicine man carves with a knife, or makes rude drawings of, certain spirits called *miku* or *mikužeké* (see Theological Beliefs): a crocodile, snakes, a monkey, a bird, and a skeleton in chains. The subjects

seem to depend upon the sickness. Some are the medicine man's spirit helpers while some

[776] are malignant spirits who are thought to have caused the disease. This log is placed beside

[753] the ill person whose hand is held by the curer or the patient has to sit on it. A chant forms

part of this ceremony.

756 Stones are another very special part of the equipment, the origin of which is also bound

778 up in religious theology (see Sacred Songs).

A medicine man may have any number of stones but there are two principal ones with a covering name which is sometimes mistaken by laymen as a third stone. This collective

It resembles the one described by Gabb, 1875, p. 520.

¹⁴⁶ Staffs vary in length from three to six feet.

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Bribri
Cabezar

756 term is *sij* or *sienkúswa*. Individually, they are
 778 called *kúswa* or *dikúswa*; *sorkúswa* or *sorkú-*
 [172] *swa*. They resemble small river stones and are
 sometimes found in pre-Columbian graves.

[172] Today, the stones are "given" or "appear" to
 the medicine man on special occasions, or are
 handed down as a sacred heirloom by a col-
 [428] league who must also belong to the same clan.
 When a medicine man dies, if he does not wish
 to give his own stones to a young professional,
 his brother or clan keeps them until a new
 doctor has need of them.

[155] Curing (*see* Curing) is impossible without
 these two stones although other ones are also
 used. Some are taken from the belly of a wild
 pig, tapir, deer, etc. These, besides being em-
 [224] ployed for curing, are used to call the par-
 ticular animal when one hunts and it is for this
 reason the Indians say that medicine men never
 lack game.

[824] Leaves with white spots, called *aik* (*Aracea*
sp.) in Bribri, also are part of the curing
 paraphernalia. The sap is caustic and the leaf
 is used more as an indication of magic power
 than for any other reason.

[844] Tobacco for smoking is essential during
 childbirth. Other articles which compose a

[755] medicine man's equipment and which were left
 [237] by *sibu* to be utilized while curing include the
 shell or body of a small land turtle, *kué*; a
 lizard, *trook*; the eyeteeth of jaguars; the
 feathers of certain water fowl, macaws, quet-
 zals, hawks, and other birds; animal skins; and
 shells of which three are of particular impor-
 tance. These are *tsumanik* and *tsrikuo*, a rose
 and white clam shell; and *duk*, a conch shell.

756 **Training and Procedure.** Although there is no
 fixed time required for preparing to become a
 medicine man, it usually takes from two to
 six years, depending upon the capacity of the
 novice's memory. The first six months are
 intensive. The apprentice goes for three days
 without eating. He makes a lean-to in the
 woodland out of all the herbs he can gather,
 edible and non-edible, and stays there for two
 days so as not to see the sun. At night he can
 go outside. During this period, the medicine
 man appears and teaches the ritual songs. After
 two days and two nights the teacher and his
 pupil eat all the edible leaves or herbs of the
 hut.

The next task for the novice is to obtain

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Cabécar
Terraba
Changuenq

173 Cabécares, and only a very few managed to
 726 escape. The Terribís cut off heads,¹⁸¹ cleaned
 [727] them, and used them for cups. They cooked
 the heads and dried them well and then put
 them in certain houses.

The king of the Cabécares was furious. He gathered together people and went to Terribís where they killed some of their enemies. But still the Cabécares were frightened and many hid. The *usegLa* always remained at a great distance. One day, nevertheless, an *usegLa* was taken captive with other Cabécares and killed.

[727] The Terribís cut off ten heads but kept alive as prisoner a young girl who was niece of the *usegLa*. They tied and carried her, and she cried and cried. All this time the heads made an awful noise, which was more frightening as they still had their teeth. The *usegLa*'s head took the lead and told the Terribís that the Cabécares would come and reap vengeance.

After a three days' journey, they reached the dwellings of the Terribís. The skull of the uncle continued to make noise, the teeth chattering horribly. In desperation, the Terribís tied the skull on a rope and hung it in a house. One night, however, the rope broke and the skull slipped out.

The people in the house thought some child had fallen when they heard a noise. They ran to look outside. There, on a barren hill, was a great jaguar who grabbed the Terribís one by one. The beast went from house to house until he had carried everybody away except the girl who remained crying. Then it was that *sibu* interfered and told the jaguar not to kill all the Terribís because he wanted some left. The jaguar had to obey.

In the early morning, the creature returned to the spot and said to the girl, "Don't be afraid even if I am dead and look like a jaguar. I am your uncle and I will take you home. I'll carry you across the rivers and over the mountains, but I'll leave you beside your house. As I am dead, I cannot enter. Just don't be afraid."

• [172] ¹⁸¹ Trophy heads are common in Costa Rican archaeology.

[648] ¹⁸² The Changuinas were allies of the British against the Spanish, the Cabécares on the Pacific side of the range, and the Borucas. Their home territory was along the Changuinola River in northwestern Panama. The British gave them scissors, knives, axes, beads, etc., and sent them across the cordillera to the

[P64(B)]

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Cabécar
Bribri

*589 taught people how to dance and to sing the
[595] following song:

sibu came in the form of a buzzard
dressed as a man,
Collar on his neck.
The collar reflected,
He came with the collar
Ejené, ekujé,¹⁰⁰
Ejené, canjé,¹⁰⁰
He came to give us the dance
He came from the air.
Ejené, ekujé,
Ejené, canjé.

A TALE OF THE *bukLú*

(Bribri)

Two men were hunting tapir and hit one with an arrow. Suddenly, a big man appeared carrying a rifle and told them to meet him below. He went and shot and the men realized that the rifle was Thunder. A short while later, a man came with a two-headed serpent tied in a coil with pita string. He told them to follow him.

They reached a beautiful house which was a lagoon where *bukLú* lived. He ate the snake and one man was taken inside to be eaten. *bukLú* was in a hammock in the center of the house with many devils, the *kiritum*, seated beside him facing the wall in order not to look at him. The man sat by *bukLú* who proceeded to make him a medicine man.

[825] After two months of study at night with *bukLú*, the man returned to his village. There he told his people that they should not wound animals without killing them because he had to take care of them. He showed them quantities of arrows which he had taken from wounded ones.

sutá

(Cabécar and Bribri)

[776] *sutá* was *sibu's* grandmother. She created the first human beings from clay and kept the sperm of all human races in a basket.

● [172] ¹⁰⁰ Pre-Columbian gold figures of buzzards with a collar are frequently found in graves. The collars recall the actual bead ones of the Guaymí of Panama.

[593] ¹⁰⁰ This has no meaning but is used for the sound and to emphasize the beat.

[P.69(A)]

SA19 Talamanca SA19

Bribri
Cabelar

476 traditions, are known by the Spanish term
 574 *juntas* or *bLo-zé* (chicha-to drink) in Bribri,
 273 or in Cabécar *dí²⁰⁴-zə* (chicha-to drink). They
 are held when there is need of group labor
 such as building a house, clearing a field,
 making a bridge, etc. It is the only time except

[571] at death or bone burial that groups of people
 meet. The person giving the *junta* must supply
 liberal quantities of chicha and at least suffi-
 [535] cient food. Dancing with singing, particularly
 533 on the Caribbean side, forms part of the enter-
 184 tainment. On the Pacific, singing is not as

[534] [Text continues TOP of P.69(B)-Analysis]

THE ARTS

534 Musical Instruments. Upright drums are the
 preferred instruments of Talamanca. In pre-

• [172] Columbian graves they are found fashioned of
 clay and occur from miniature sizes to three

[824] feet in height. Today they are made of palm
 237 or cedar with one end covered with iguana

skin and the other end open. The skin is
 381 fastened to the wood with a glue made from

[824] the red fruit of the *butsi* tree and is then tied
 with *pita*. Their size varies from two and a

half to three feet and they are played by hand.
 Formerly a small all-wooden drum with a

[766] U-shaped slit²⁰⁵ was used at the burial of
 chiefs. These were played with a bone or a

[184] stick. The people on the Pacific side do not
 have the upright drum but use the Chiricano

[237] *caja* or round drum of palm wood covered at
 both ends with wild boar skin and played with

two sticks.

534 In Talamanca, and as a rule in all *jawé*
 237 houses, armadillo shells are rubbed with a stick

while those of land turtles are used in a similar
 manner or as clappers. The conch shell is made

[202] into a horn to relay messages but not for a
 musical instrument. Rattles of gourds filled

with seeds or pebbles and with fowl bone or
 wooden handles are also seen.

533 Tempo. There are varied beats for the up-
 right drum: 4 short and 1 long; 3 short and

1 long; 2 short and 1 long. As many as twenty
 drums were played at one time in Talamanca

[184] when the Singer functioned. On the Pacific
 side, the old pieces are seldom heard. The

[Text continues middle of P.69(B)-Analysis]

[192] ²⁰⁵ *dí* is also the word for water and is often used
 for river.

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Bribri
Cabecar

535 example, *buréte* is performed by a line of men; *busiki* is with men and women in the same line; *bul-takule* is usually a line of men but there may be one of women. When one sex dances, the arm is interlocked at the elbow with the next in line. Women and men put their hand on the shoulder of the person in front. The single line step is the first one used in the circle dance. Twenty people or less participate in these lines. The drum is held under the arms [539] of the male dancers. Females do not play them.

535 The common dances among the Bribri are those of the buzzard and the monkey. Each has its own explanation. The first one is said to have originated because the boss of the buzzards went to *sibu* to learn to sing and dance. He learned and came to earth wearing a collar and showed man how to sing and dance (see Theological Myths: *The Dance*). Some versions hold that it was *sibu* himself in the form of a buzzard who did this and not the boss of these birds. He wore a collar and taught human beings to dance in a circle because the buzzards after eating fly in a circle.²⁰⁸ When he finished his task, he retired to where the sun lives.

The monkey dance is supposed to have been taught to man by the grandfather of the Congo monkey who learned this from *sibu*. Its prime purpose is to have man happy (see Lay Songs: *bul-ikLak*).

535 Another celebration to do with happiness and good luck is seen in Talamanca among the Bribri when a new home is to be occupied.

342
532 The whole ceremony is known as *itsó* (see Songs), taking its name from the *disaplina* palm (*itsó* or *kémas* in Bribri; *Chamaedorea* sp.) from which the mask is made today. The beard of the face is Spanish moss. After the inauguration of a house, the mask, which is supposed to assure the longevity of the family who are to inhabit the new home, is hidden and the celebrants have to hunt for it before the dance can be performed.

535 Segarra and Julia²⁰⁷ describe a hunter's

535
224
533

[776]
[172]
[171]

²⁰⁸ This interpretation of God in buzzard form wearing a collar is reflected in the gold figures found in ancient graves. The style and form of the collars associated with these figures are similar to the bead ones used today by the Guaymí Indians of north-western Panama.

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THE TALAMANCAN TRIBES OF COSTA RICA

19. *dikúswa*²⁰¹ (Bribri)

1. To cure, to sing for the first [time]. *sibu* sent *dikúswa* for the first [time] to cure to sing. In the [following] morning, *sibu* asked *dikúswa*, "Will I die?"

2. *dikúswa* answered, "No you will not die. You pretend thus."²⁰² You will never die." (2) Because of this *sibu* left *dikúswa* to cure us.

Lay Songs

20. Song for the Dance of the Monkey (Bribri)

1. See Linguistic Text.
2. Turtle, turtle pool, turtle pool, devil pool, bad pool,
Someone passed me.
Dance [of *kúswa*], dance [of *kúswa*].
3. See Linguistic Text.

19. *dikúswa*

1. *čtsá kúLé*²⁰³ *i-tsúk*. *sibu*-to *dikúswa*²⁰⁴ *patkəm* *čtsá kúLé-i-tsúk*.
buLáme-tá, *sibu*-to *dikúswa* *ichake*, "šú-rušwami?"

2. *dikúswa*-to *iqté*, "ké bu-ruškua. be-čo emč. ké be-ruškwa šqte."²⁰⁵
(2) *č-kuegi sibu*-to *dikúswa*²⁰⁶ *meč-et bušónmeLe*.

20. *buLtakule*²⁰⁷

1. *koogey*²⁰⁸ *koaget jaegoange*²⁰⁹ *koanjé jaegogog*.
koanjé egoange koanjé.
2. *ta-kueč*²¹⁰ *kuen-dí*²¹¹ *ta-kuen-dí*, *Lan*²¹² *dí*,
ta-saLeLa seLori,
ta-doa-donchi.
*jé*²¹³ *iberke ikotsá*, *jé-iberke jén*.
3. *koanjejet*²¹⁴ *jekoa jéet*.

²⁰¹ This is the medicine man's song against sickness.²⁰² Le., that you are sick.²⁰³ *kúLé* means to sing and to cure with a stone. All curing songs use *kúLé*.²⁰⁴ Although this is the sacred stone's name, here it applies to a bird. In the beginning, the bird was the messenger to *sibu* and then became the stone. This should not be confused with the *cuyo*.²⁰⁵ This also means "nothing."²⁰⁶ The connotation is that the bird, *dikúswa*, has been changed to the stone, *dikúswa*.²⁰⁷ The language is a mixture of ancient Térraba, Cabécar, and some Bribri. It is sung as men and women dance in a line.²⁰⁸ Words in section 1 could not be translated and are said to be ancient Térraba.²⁰⁹ This is the name of an abandoned Bribri site in Talamanca.²¹⁰ *se-* is used as a prefix only for the sound.²¹¹ These three words together signify a pool with a turtle.²¹² See Theological Beliefs.²¹³ *jé* and *jén* are for sound only. The word combination signifies the dance of *dikúswa*.²¹⁴ These sounds signify adornments.[755]
[532]
[778]

[197]

[172]

6: Stone E-5 (1956-1959) 1962

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Cabecar

Bribri

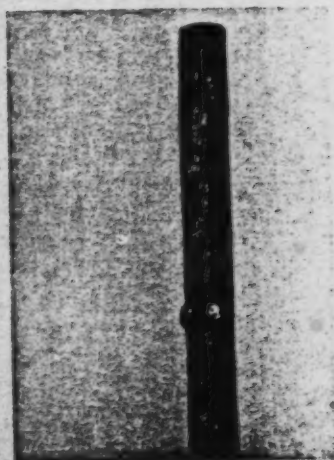
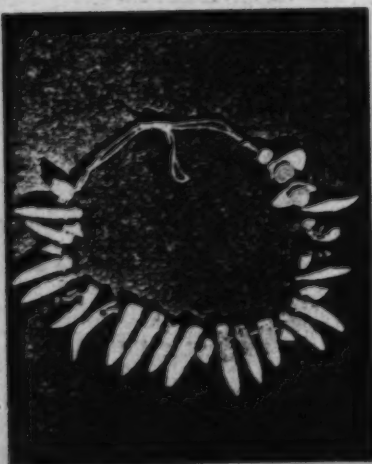
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PEASANT MOUNTAIN FARM

532
756
778
[172]



301
789
411



a, Ceremonial staff from cache on slopes of Inca volcano, Central Pinar. A, Ceremonial staff from Talamanca, late 19th century (property of Don Odo Jarama L.). c, Cabecar necklace of jaguar teeth, shells, bone, and beads to ward off evil (property of Don Julio Calles T.J.). d, Part of Cabecar blow gun with handle sight.

[END PLATE II]